



Press Release

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Pennsylvania Potato Crop Down 18 Percent

HARRISBURG – Total potato stocks stored in Pennsylvania on December 1, 2002 were 1,200,000 cwt., 33 percent less than a year ago according to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service.

Stocks are defined as the quantity (whether sold or not) remaining in storage for all purposes and uses, including seed potatoes not yet moved, and shrinkage, waste, and other losses that occur after the date of each report. Sales of fall potatoes for all purposes for the past 5 years averaged 90.8 percent of the total fall production. Shrinkage, loss, and home use account for the remaining 9.2 percent.

Potato production for the Commonwealth in 2002, 2,590,000 cwt, was 18 percent lower than the 2001 crop. 14,000 acres of potato were harvested in Pennsylvania this fall and the average yield per acre was estimated at 185 cwt., down 21 percent from the 2001 yield.

In the **U.S.**, the 15 major potato States held 265 million cwt of potatoes in storage December 1, 2002, up 2 percent from last year but 15 percent below 2000. Storage accounts for 65 percent of the 2002 fall storage States' production, down 2 percentage points from last year. Stocks by type show more round white and fewer russet and long white (Shepody) than a year ago.

Disappearance of 146 million cwt, is up 13 percent from last year but 2 percent below 2000 movement. Shrink and loss of 16.2 million cwt so far in the season is up 10 percent from last year but 14 percent below the same date in 2000. Processors in the 9 major States used 77.6 million cwt of potatoes this season, up 18 percent from a year ago but 1 percent below two years ago. Dehydrating usage accounts for 15.7 million cwt of the total processing.

Production of fall potatoes for 2002 is forecast at 417 million cwt, up less than 1 percent from November and 6 percent above last year. However, this is 11 percent smaller than the record high 2000 crop. Area harvested, at 1.11 million acres, is up 4 percent from last year but 7 percent below two years ago. The average yield is forecast at 374 cwt per acre, 3 cwt above last month and 7 cwt above last year. Production estimates are generally lower this year in Central and Eastern States but higher in the West. Harvest was completed on schedule in nearly all States.